

In the Claims

1. (Previously amended) A device for use in the cleaning of dental instruments comprising:

- a) a finger rest,
- b) a stem,
- c) an open container having an exterior surface, an interior surface, and a top, said exterior surface having a girth near the top, said interior surface containing a plurality of prongs, and said top having a protective rim.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the exterior surface is textured.

3. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein a cross-section of the device is round.

4. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the container contains gauze.

5. (Previously amended) A device for use in the cleaning of dental instruments comprising:

- a) a finger rest,
- b) a stem,
- c) an open container having an exterior surface, an interior surface, and a top, said interior surface containing a plurality of prongs, and said top having a protective rim.

6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the container contains gauze.

7. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the device is made of flexible material.

8. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the exterior surface of the open container is made of hard plastic and the interior surface of the open container is made of soft plastic.

9. (Currently amended) A method of cleaning a dental instrument having a pointed tip which comprises:

- a) holding the device of claim 4 in one hand,
- b) holding the dental instrument in the other hand,
- c) placing the pointed tip of the dental instrument inside the open container,
- d) putting the pointed end tip of the dental instrument in contact with the gauze,
- e) applying pressure to the container to assure firm contact between the instrument and the gauze,
- f) wiping the tip of the instrument on the gauze, and
- g) removing the instrument from the open container.

10. (Currently amended) A method of cleaning a dental instrument having a pointed tip which comprises:

- a) holding the device of claim 6 in one hand,
- b) holding the dental instrument in the other hand,
- c) placing the pointed tip of the dental instrument inside the open container,

- d) putting the pointed end tip of the dental instrument in contact with the gauze,
- e) applying pressure to the container to assure firm contact between the instrument and the gauze,
- f) wiping the tip of the instrument on the gauze, and
- g) removing the instrument from the open container.